

Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar **Economic Development Commission (EDC)**
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 22, 2008
EDC Office, 312 Fourth Street SW, Willmar

Present: Beth Fischer, Jean Geselius, Anna Gorres, Cameron Macht, Julie Redepenning, Steve Salzer, Milan Schmiesing and Heather Thompson

Excused: Nancy Miller, Diane Schulte and Deb Van Buren

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director and Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Guest: Betsy Bonnema

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Co-chair Jean Geselius called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Cameron Macht, SECONDED BY Julie Redepenning, to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2008 meeting as mailed and e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

MONTHLY REPORTS/UPDATES

[Anna Gorres joined the meeting.]

Ag Show. Steve Renquist reported the Agribusiness/Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee will use the panels it currently has for the upcoming West Central Ag Show. The EDC's Ag Committee will share the booth with the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Ag Committee.

Bring Them Back Home newsletter. Cameron Macht reported Paul Bredeson and Bob Dickerson will be featured in the spring newsletter, which will be completed in March. The summer issue will feature technology.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

EDC brochure photographs. Geselius reported the committee will wait until March or April to get nice weather photographs of the MinnWest Technology Campus, Willmar airport and area lakes. Nancy Birkeland suggested area tourism photos also be taken as the Tourism Committee is seeking local photos for advertising; its current photos are fall scenes. **Betsy Bonnema** will put together a list of suggested photos to be taken.

[Jean Spaulding joined the meeting.]

Renquist introduced Jean Spaulding, the EDC's new assistant director, who will be this committee's staff liaison.

Technology Task Force. Renquist provided background on the Technology Task Force and the recent website and residential seminars it has hosted. Jean Spaulding thanked this committee for its help in marketing the seminars. The task force will be determining whether future seminars will be done and what entity should host future education opportunities. Spaulding reported the task force awarded 10 grants of up to \$500 to start a new website and 10 grants of up to \$500 to expand an existing website. The criteria and information used to select the recipients were shown to the committee. Spaulding has spoken to Anne Polta of the *West Central Tribune* to do a followup story on the Technology Task Force's goals.

Website updates. Geselius reported she and Macht divided the remaining website pages to review for updates. The committee feels the site has very good information and has received many compliments. Birkeland reported the website updates are slowly being done in the order of the meetings, but it takes quite a bit of time to do.

MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC). Steve Salzer reported MWTC has selected "business, science, innovation" for use in its new marketing materials. Its updated website should be online by the end of next week and will include more photographs, lease rates and building information. The campus' domain name was shortened to mnwesttechnology.com and the current site will be redirected. Additional domain names were also purchased. E-mails will also change to the new domain name. Salzer announced Nikki Taunton is leaving MWTC and they are seeking her replacement. Salzer stated the six new businesses to the campus held a successful open house with approximately 150 attending. MWTC is starting a science cooperative from a Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) grant. A building will be renovated and equipped and then ownership of the building must be turned over to a public entity. MWTC is speaking with St. Cloud State University and the University of Minnesota in regard to ownership. If the universities are not interested, the EDC may be an option as well as other public entities. Salzer reported Lisa Hughes and Connie Ireland of DEED visited MWTC and Hughes will be dedicating 20% of her time to promoting MWTC. **Renquist, Chris Huisinga and Salzer** will meet to draft the letter to the 10 businesses selected as candidates for MWTC. A turkey research center is also being pursued. Bonnema reported viewing the "Just Imagine" mini documentary produced for Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF), and recommended that a link to the video on SWIF's website be included on kandyohi.com and MWTC's site. **Salzer** will followup with Torry Norling on use of the video.

[Jean Spaulding was excused from the meeting.]

2008 Job Fair. Julie Redepenning distributed the program of participating businesses and sponsors (see copy attached to original minutes) and reported there are not as many booths as last year. The EDC will have its booth at the February 28 Job Fair. Bonnema stated the MWTC booth panels will be redone. Salzer reported Life-Science Innovations will represent MWTC at the Job Fair. Booth setup will be the morning of February 28.

Committee meeting date. During the meeting, the discussion was to continue to meet the fourth Friday of each month. **Co-Chairs** will contact committee members not in attendance to discuss various options. (**Note:** Based on current committee members availability further discussion was needed between the fourth Wednesday and Friday of each month starting at 8:00 a.m. Follow up e-mails by Geselius and Thompson determined the meeting will alternate between the fourth Wednesday and Friday of the month with an 8:00 a.m. start time. The next meeting will be 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 26, 2008.)

Volunteer Appreciation & Awards Reception. Geselius reported EDC volunteers are being videotaped. Deb Van Buren is selecting and ordering the menu. Press releases for the Earl B. Olson Entrepreneurial Spirit Award and Wilt Croonquist Emerging Entrepreneur Award were sent yesterday and an e-mail was sent to EDC volunteers requesting nominations for the Volunteer of the Year award. Anne Polta has been contacted to do a story on the Reception. The invitation was shown to the committee and has been mailed to local dignitaries and EDC volunteers (see copy attached to original minutes). **Heather Thompson** and **Bonnema** will meet regarding placement of EDC image ads. The awards and promotional items will include the puzzle piece theme with "You're an Essential Piece" imprinted on them.

Domain names. Anna Gorres reported the two domain names purchased through CloudNet have been redirected. The other three domain names are hosted elsewhere and will be redirected through that company once information is located.

EDC Mugs. Thompson reported the white mugs the committee was shown at the last meeting can have four-color images imprinted on them. Other options are also being reviewed. Renquist authorized ordering 144 mugs once a design is selected.

Willmar Area Multicultural Market (WAMM). Gorres reported WAMM's 2007 goal was to kickoff its capital campaign, which it has now decided to do behind the scenes. WAMM has decided to concentrate on more tangible goals in 2008, such as promoting the market and making people believe in it. WAMM will work with current businesses on coordinated signage and marketing to match WAMM's theme/look. WAMM is looking for financing for store front signage. The committee complimented WAMM on its attractive store front signage and use of its color theme.

NEW BUSINESS—There was no new business.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **8:00 a.m., Friday, March 21, 2008** at the EDC office, 312 Fourth Street SW, Willmar.

ANNOUNCEMENT—The EDC's Appreciation & Awards Reception is 5:30 p.m., March 25, 2008 at the Holiday Inn/Willmar Conference Center. All committee members are to send an electronic photograph of themselves to the EDC office at edp@kandiyohi.com.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:10 a.m.